

**GROWTH & INFRASTRUCTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
6 OCTOBER 2010**

**OXFORDSHIRE MINERALS & WASTE DEVELOPMENT
FRAMEWORK: CORE STRATEGY – PREFERRED MINERALS
STRATEGY**

Report by Interim Head of Sustainable Development

Background

1. The Minerals and Waste Development Framework will set out how minerals will be supplied and waste managed in the county. It will consist of a Core Strategy that sets out broad locations for mineral working, supported by site allocation documents that are informed by a local assessment of need. The Core Strategy will include a vision and strategic objectives, a spatial strategy, core policies, and a monitoring and implementation framework.
2. An update report on the Framework was made to the Growth and Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee on 28 October 2009. That recorded that progress had been delayed by uncertainties surrounding the context within which the Framework has to be developed but that work was proceeding on drawing up options for the spatial strategy.

Development and Assessment of Minerals Strategy Options

3. Following consideration of potential options by the Minerals and Waste Plan Working Group, consultation was carried out in February and March 2010 with key stakeholders on an initial set of spatial strategy options for mineral working. Independently facilitated workshop meetings were held with District and County Council members, groups of parish councils (3 area events, at Benson, Standlake and Stanford in the Vale), environmental groups and mineral operators. Technical and statutory bodies were also consulted.
4. The output from that consultation was considered by the Working Group and revisions made to the options. Further consultation was carried out on a revised set of spatial strategy options in July 2010, involving two independently facilitated workshop meetings at Benson and Standlake and a workshop with mineral operators. Technical and statutory bodies were again consulted.
5. The revised minerals strategy options (July 2010) are set out in paper MW1 (paragraphs 4.8 – 4.10) attached as Annex 1. There are three options for sand and gravel and single options for soft sand and crushed rock. Paper MW1 includes the guiding principles that should underpin a minerals strategy. It also summarises responses to consultations on the options, a technical assessment and testing of the options. A sustainability appraisal of the options has also been carried out and the report has been published on the County Council's website.

Views of the Minerals and Waste Plan Working Group

6. The options in paper MW1 (Annex 1) were discussed by the Minerals and Waste Plan Working Group on 27 September 2010 (meeting note attached as Annex 2).
7. The recommendation of the Working Group is that the County Council's preferred spatial strategy for sand and gravel working should be based on option 1 – concentrate extraction at existing areas of working: Lower Windrush Valley; Eynsham / Cassington / Yarnton; Radley; Sutton Courtenay; and also Caversham. The Working Group agreed that this would provide clarity in the short to medium term. It also recommended that the ability of these areas to provide for the medium to longer term should be assessed in light of the work to determine local need. It highlighted that flexibility may be needed to consider new areas of working in the longer term.
8. For soft sand and for crushed rock, the Working Group concurred with the options in Paper MW1; for soft sand – working in three existing areas: south east of Faringdon; the Tubney / Marcham / Hinton Waldrist area; and Duns Tew; and for crushed rock – working in three existing areas: north of Bicester to the east of the River Cherwell; south of the A40 near Burford; and south east of Faringdon.

Next Steps

9. A report on the minerals spatial strategy options and the next steps in the preparation of the Core Strategy will be made to Cabinet on 19 October. The work to provide a local assessment of the aggregates supply requirement for Oxfordshire is being commissioned and will be completed by December 2010.
10. The view of the Minerals and Waste Plan Working Group is that consultation on the preferred spatial strategy for mineral working is combined with consultation on the local assessment of need and other key minerals policy matters. This will be carried out in early spring 2011, following consideration by the Working Group in January 2011 and by Cabinet in February 2011. The overall timetable for the Core Strategy remains unchanged, with a complete document (covering both minerals and waste) published for formal representations in December 2011, prior to submission to the Secretary of State in 2012 for independent examination.
11. **The Growth & Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee is INVITED to note the report and to make comments for consideration by Cabinet.**

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Background Papers: Nil

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